

SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY WORK



COVID-19 continues to keep our work focused on food distribution, homelessness, housing, job searching, and income support.



University Avenue Housing

We are one year in to our interim housing project at University Ave, a converted student dorm, providing housing for 80 people who have been long-term unhoused and unsheltered. With the help of the Region of Waterloo, we brought together a complex mix of people to create a space of stability, affordability and safety. Our cafeteria-style kitchen at UA feeds 80 people a day, 24 hours a day. It is a place that offers rest, nutritious food and social supports. 80 people have made this challenging but successful housing project their home this past year.



Preparing 600 meals per day

Last year we renovated Maurita's Kitchen into a commissary kitchen. Every day delicious and hearty meals are prepared and made ready for serving to St. John's Kitchen, University Ave housing, our supportive housing locations, and motels.

In partnership with the Food Bank of Waterloo Region, we have made sure that people have access to hearty meals, snacks, drinks, and hamper items – a real discipline when so many other access points have shut down during Covid.



St. John's Kitchen

St. John's Kitchen has been open on weekdays for 30 – 40 people at a time, serving up to 200 people a day, mostly those who are unsheltered, to eat a meal, to connect with other services, use of the washrooms (there are very few public washrooms that are open), showers, access to laundry, the hamper room for take-away snacks, and drinking water.

St. John's Kitchen distributes up to another 150 meals each day in packaged take-out containers. These are served out of the Garage. Many of these meals are given out to people who live near the kitchen in rooms and apartments and would have been regulars at St. John's Kitchen.



We continue to be an important base for problem-solving, connection to community resources, and support for housing or shelter options. In collaboration with our Inner City Health Alliance partners we support vaccination clinics, Covid-responses, and testing, providing PPE, supports to people isolating, and encouragement along the way.

Shelter and Housing

We are currently hosting 60 motel rooms for people who are unwell and unsheltered. We are grateful to the Covid-funds that have made these motel rooms available, and for the combined Street Outreach and Specialized Outreach Services that support access to medical supports, wound care, Covid-isolation supports, connections to primary care, housing services, legal services and wellness checks. The deep mental health and substance use issues combine in ways that leave people vulnerable in these times where resources are scarce.

The daily rounds and wellness checks, the food deliveries, connection to health care and probation, helping people to line up documents in order to be housing-ready, helping people to be as safe as possible as people scramble for basic needs in a world turned upside-down.



Employment and Financial Supports

The world of Job Searching and Income Support has also turned upside down. Finding work that is safe, helping New Canadians with limited language skills, and sorting out the changing landscape of Income Support and benefits. We are supporting older workers looking to be safe in their work and feeling vulnerable, women who are trying to support their children after family breakdown, people who are searching for new work. Hours and hours are spent researching, accessing supports, and offering patient, thoughtful work to unravel knots and open up possibilities. The Job Search Resource Centre helped over 500 people with job searching while Money Matters helped 2,854 people navigate income supports and 1,685 people file tax returns.



Community Tool projects

Community Tool projects create access to basic resources like furniture, clothing, bikes, and computers. These projects are important public spaces that counter social isolation. The Market Garden has had a successful growing season demonstrating urban agriculture, Worth a Second Look has been open and redistributing used furniture and housewares, Computer Recycling is starting new open hours and Recycle Cycles has had a good summer recycling and repairing bikes. Volunteers help make the work possible.



Your generous support helps strengthen our community work

donate.theworkingcentre.org



November 2021

Dear Friends,

It is hard to express the substantial changes to The Working Centre community because of the COVID pandemic. For almost two years, our focus has been to prioritize those unsheltered, those homeless who have been left outdoors, while so many public and private services have been closed to the public.

The commitment of the workers of The Working Centre, in the midst of the pandemic, to extend and grow projects designed to reduce the conditions of homelessness has been breathtaking.

St. John's Kitchen has remained open each weekday as a vital service for the unsheltered. At the same time, each morning in the parking lot, we have run a major food distribution project for those who have shelter but do not have access to healthy food.

By converting Maurita's Kitchen into a commissary kitchen, 600 meals are prepared each day; and are packaged or served at St. John's Kitchen, University Ave housing, motels, and Working Centre supportive housing projects.

Outreach workers during the pandemic have been a main support to the homeless group helping to navigate the challenges of homelessness through providing medical, mental health, wound care, legal, food and housing help. We have been surrounded by those who have no access to housing. The despair is palpable as the cold weather approaches.

The Water Street House has operated throughout the pandemic, providing a safe place for dealing with homelessness and drug use. Our learnings from this work will continue to grow.

Each day The Working Centre estimates that it is supporting over 200 people through our housing projects. The most important example of this are the 80 people who are now living at the dorm residences on University Avenue. UA, as we call it, has become a home to a group of people who had been out in the cold for many years. It is truly remarkable the difference this housing has made on people's lives. Here are some comments from residents:

"I now have a place of my own; I have no family and don't want to feel alone; I finally have a roof over my head."

"I'm not homeless anymore; I think that the medical services provided by the harm reduction team are really helpful."

"I am glad not to be homeless, having the chance to get a house and get my kids back. I have 2 cats, medical services provided."

On Queen Street, the Job Search Resource Centre has been constantly busy providing job search help and support with income tax and navigating COVID income programs. Our Job Café projects in downtown Kitchener have continued street sweeping, evening garbage pickup, and Discovery Teams support that has expanded into Waterloo. We have re-opened most of our Community Tool projects including Recycle Cycles Community Bike Shop, the Market Garden and Greenhouse, Computer Recycling, and Worth A Second Look Furniture and Housewares thrift store.

Your donations have helped us reweave our creative projects to serve the pressing homelessness issues that continue to grow. Supporters of The Working Centre have proven, year after year, that community donations are vital to respond to local issues. We are grateful for your ongoing support of our community building efforts.

Sincerely,

Joe Mancini, Director

We share our quarterly newspaper Good Work News with our contributors. Learn more about our community-based initiatives by visiting our website at www.theworkingcentre.org

Donate to support
The Working Centre

Total Gift Amount

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$500

Other: _____

Please direct my donation to:

The Working Centre St. John's Kitchen

Where it is needed most

Payment Method:

Cheque (payable to The Working Centre)

To make a credit card donation please:

Visit online at: donate.theworkingcentre.org
or call: 519.743.1151 x111

Would you like to donate through e-transfer?
Please call us at 519.743.1151 x111 to set it up.

Your Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Incorporated as
K-W Working Centre for the Unemployed
Charitable Registration No. 13092 9 607 RR001